

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 AID-05 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6691
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USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 2437

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, NU
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MILITARY SALES TO NICARAGUA

REF: MILGP MSGS A) 271427ZYJUN, B) 181332Z OCT, C) 271731Z OCT,
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1977), H) 201704 JAN, I) 092152Z FEB, J)0092153Z FEB, K)092154
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MAR, P) 141646Z MAR, Q) 141648Z MAR

SUMMARY: EMBASSY WISHES TO BRING TO ATTENTION OF DEPT A SERIES OF
PEN

D-
ING FROZEN REQUESTS FOR NON-LETHAL AND NON-MAJOR MILITARY EQUIP-
MENT CASH SALES. IN LIGHT OF CONGRESSIOMAL INTEREST IN APPLICATION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY TOWARD NICARAGUA, THESE REQUESTS (LIKE THE
SLING SWIVEL CASE) COULD BECOME A SOURCE OF CONTENTION. EMBASSY OP-
POSES AT THE TIME THE SALE OF ANY WEAPONS, MUNITIONS, MAJOR NEW
EQUIPMENT, OR MILITARY ITEMS WHOSE PRIMARY EMPLOYEMENT WOULD BE IN
AGRESSIVE OVERATIONS. BUT WE BELIEVE MANY OF THE REFERENCE
REQUESTS
COULD BE GRADUALLY RELEASED WITH MINIMAL ADVERSE PUBLICITY. END
SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY IS REVIEWING REFERENCED SUSPENDED MILITARY SALES CASES IN
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LIGHT OF NEW CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN APPLICATION OF U.S. HUMAN
RIGHTS POLICY TOWARD NICARAGUA. WHEN THE DELAY ON APPROVAL OF
DEVEL-
OPMENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR NICARAGUA WAS RECENTLY ENDED, REGARDLESS

OF
WHATEVER POSITIVE IMPACT ON INFLUENCING SOMOZA TOWARDS MODERATION
AND
ACCOMMODATION THE DELAY MAY HAVE HAD, IT RESULTED IN PUBLICITY WHICH
WE BELIEVE HAD A GREATER POLITICAL IMPACT THAN WOULD HAVE BEEN THE
CASE IF THE SUSPENSE ON ASSISTANCE HAD NOT BEEN INITIATED IN THE
FIRST PLACE AND LOANS HAD BEEN ROUTINELY APPROVED. EMBASSY IS CON-
CERNED THAT A SIMILAR SITUATION COULD OCCUR WITH REGARD TO MILITARY
ASSISTANCE.

2. THERE ARE OVER FIFTEEN PENDING REQUESTS FOR CASH SALES (REFTELS).
THE REQUESTS DATE BACK TO JUNE 1977. THESE REQUESTS INCLUDE REPAIR
PARTS ON U.S. EQUIPMENT FURNISHED TO NICARAGUA UNDER THE MAP GRANT
PROGRAM AS WELLAS HEALTH AND WELFARE ITEMS (I.E. BEDS, BLANKETS,
MATTRESSES, TENTS, ETC.). MANY OF THE REQUESTS ARE FOR DEFENSE
PROPERTY DISPOSAL SERVICES (DPDS) ITEMS. MOST OF THIS EQUIPMENT IS
USED, OBSOLETE OR UNSERVICEABLE WHICH THE GON WOULD USE FOR REPAIR
PARTS AND TO SATISFY A SERIOUS SHORTFALL IN HEALTH AND WELFARE ITEMS
FOR TRAINEES.

3. EMBASSY VIEW IS THAT A DISTINCTION SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN (A)
MUNITIONS ITEMS AND (B) NON-MUNITIONS ITEMS. WITHIN THE NON-MUNITIONS
CATEGORY, EMBASSY WOULD ALSO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN (B-1) MAJOR
ITEMS NEW TO THE GN INVENTORY AND CROWD CONTROL ITEMS AS OPPOSED
TO
(B-2) SPARE PARTS, REPLACEMENTS. WITHIN THIS MATRIX, EMBASSY BELIEVES
THAT SALE OF ITEMS IN THE (B-2) CATEGORY (NON-MUNITIONS, NON-NEW)
WOULD GENERATE MINIMAL ADVERSE PUBLICITY. CONTINUING SALES OF THIS
TYPE SPACED GRADUALLY RATHER THAN ACCUMULATED INTO LARGE PACKAGES
COULD DRAW DOWN OUTSTANDING FMS CREDIT LINE AND AVOID THE
APPEARANCE
OF EITHER U.S. INTERVENTION ON THE SIDE OF SOMOZA OR AN ANTI-SOMOZA
BOYCOTT. AS INDICATED ABOVE, THE PROBLEMWITH A BOYCOTT, EVEN IF IT
IS A INFORMAL AND UNPUBLICIIZED, IS THAT ITS ABRUPT TERMINATON IS
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UNLIKELY TO BE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED AND TAKE ON A DISPROPORTIONATE SYM-
BOLIC IMPORTANCE.

4. THE CATEGORIES OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE ITEMS WHICH EMBASSY WOULD
OPPOSE AT THIS TIME INCLUDE MUNITIONS ITEMS (E.G. FIREARMS, AMMUNI-
TION, GRENADES, WEAPONS SYSTEMS SUCH AS HELICOPTERS, ETC), MAJOR
EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD BE NEW TO THE GN INVENTORY, AND CROWD
CONTROL
ITEMS WHICH WOULD BE NEW TO THE GN INVENTORY, AND CROWD CONTROL
ITEMS
WHICH WOULD BE EMPLOYED OFFENSIVELY (E.G. TROOP CARRIERS, RIOT
CONTRO
L
VEHICLES, TEARGAS, ETC.). SUCH ITEMS WOULD BE HIGHLY

CONTROVERSIAL AND WOULD VERY LIKELY BE INTERPRETED AS ABANDONMENT
OF U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY.

5. EMBASSY WILL POUCH INFO ON OUTSTANDING GON MILITARY ASSISTANCE
REQUESTS AND ITS ANALYSIS OF HOW THE REQUESTS FIT INTO THE ABOVE
MATRIX.

6. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH THE USMILGP.
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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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